REMARKS

By this amendment, claim 2 has been amended and claims 7-9 have been added. Thus, claims 1-9 are now active in the application. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application are respectfully requested.

Minor amendments to the specification and abstract have been made in order to correct various editorial and idiomatic errors. No new matter has been added by such amendments.

In items 2 and 3 on page 2 of the Office Action, claims 2, 5 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite because the phrase "the second link mechanism" at line 6 of claim 2 lacked proper antecedent basis. Accordingly, this phrase has been changed to --a second link mechanism--, in order to obviate this rejection.

Next, in items 4-7 on pages 2-4 of the Office Action, claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Nagata (U.S. 4,729,539); and claims 3-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nataga in view of Ogasawara (JP 6050374). These rejections are respectfully traversed, and it is respectfully requested that these rejections be withdrawn, for the following reasons.

According to claim 1 of the present application, a frame structure is provided for an automobile seat, wherein the frame structure includes a frame, a lifter for adjusting a height of the frame, and a suspension unit for absorbing vibration inputted to the frame. Claim 1 also specifies that the lifter is integrally formed with the suspension unit. By this construction, the frame structure for use in, for example, an automobile intelligent seat can be made more compact. In conventional arrangements, the lifter and the suspension unit have been constructed separately.

In contrast to the present invention of claim 1, the Nagata patent discloses a seat suspension unit including a seat frame, but this arrangement includes no lifter for adjusting a height of the frame as required by claim 1.

More specifically, in the Office Action and, in particular, in the paragraph spanning pages 2 and 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner asserted that elements "(4)(4)" of the Nagata patent

constitute the claimed "lifter" for adjusting the height of the frame (3). However, the elements (4)(4) of the Nagata patent merely constitute a pair of right and left X-shaped links which vertically movably support the upper frame 3 relative to the lower frame 2. These X-shaped links (4), (4) cannot be said to constitute a "lifter" for adjusting a height of the frame; these X-shaped links merely movably support the upper frame relative to the lower frame and do not lift the upper frame relative to the lower frame so as to adjust a height of the frame.

If the Examiner considers that the adjustment mechanism 22 is also part of the claimed "lifter for adjusting a height of the frame", it is submitted that the combination of the adjustment mechanism 22 together with the X-shaped links 4 also cannot be said to constitute the claimed "lifter for adjusting a height of the frame."

More specifically, the adjustment mechanism 22 operates as follows. Upon rotary manipulation of the knob 26, the cam member 25 is likewise rotated. The cam member 25 comprises a plurality of cam surfaces 25a respectively having varied distances from the journal portions thereof. Since the cam member 25 is abutted against the end portion 20c of the torsion bar 20, rotary manipulation of the adjustment knob 26, which is effective to change which one of the cam surfaces 25a abuts against the end portion 20c of the torsion bar 20, causes the end portion 20c of the torsion bar 20 to be pressed downwardly by a greater or lesser extent, thereby adjusting the intensity of the resiliency force of the torsion bar 20. That is, manipulation of the adjustment knob 26 of the adjustment mechanism 22 causes an adjustment to the strength of resiliency of the torsion bar 20, not an adjustment of the height of the frame 3. In this regard, the Examiner's attention is directed to column 4, lines 27-33 and column 5, lines 24-31 of the Nagata patent. Therefore, even in combination with the adjustment mechanism 22, the X-shaped links 4 (5, 6) cannot be said to constitute the claimed "lifter for adjusting a height of the frame."

It is noted that the adjustment mechanism 22 of the Nagata patent has a similar function to the weight adjustment mechanism 48-56 (see, for example, Fig. 8) of the present invention. This weight adjustment mechanism of the present invention, like the adjustment mechanism 22

of the Nagata reference, provides for adjustment of the amount of strength of resiliency of the torsion bar 18 due to twisting of the torsion bar 18.

The "lifter for adjusting a height of the frame" is needed to provide for seat occupants having different body shapes or builds even if they have the same weight, whereas the weight adjustments provided by the mechanism (48-56) of the present invention and the mechanism 22 of Nagata are necessary for satisfactory functioning of the suspension unit for occupants of different weights.

Accordingly, because of the above clear distinctions between the present invention of claim 1 and the Nagata patent, it is believed apparent that claim 1 is not anticipated by the Nagata patent.

The Examiner cited the Ogasawara reference (JP 6050374) for disclosing "a suspension unit (10) comprising a magnet unit (unlabeled) having a movable magnet (30) and stationary magnets (40) (50)." However, this disclosure of the Ogasawara patent clearly does not obviate the above-discussed shortcomings of the Nagata arrangement.

Accordingly, and because the Nagata patent also clearly fails to provide any teaching or suggestion that would have motivated a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the arrangement disclosed therein or to make any combination of the references of record in such a manner as to result in or otherwise render obvious the present invention, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1, as well as the claims depending therefrom, are clearly allowable over the prior art of record.

The Examiner's attention is also directed to the dependent claims 2-9 which set forth additional features of the present invention and further define the invention over the prior art. For example, claim 7 requires the lifter to be configured for **selectively** adjusting a height of the frame. Claim 8 specifies details of the construction of the lifter, requiring the lifter to include a lifter operating mechanism (e.g. 30), a first link mechanism (e.g. 20, 24, 26) connected between the lifter operating mechanism and a front end portion of the frame 8 so as to adjust a height of the front end portion of the frame 8 upon operation of the lifter operating mechanism, and a

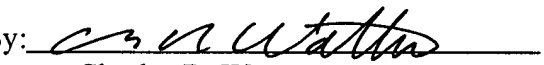
second link mechanism (e.g. 32) connected between the lifter operating mechanism and a rear end portion of the frame so as to adjust a height of the rear end portion of the frame upon operation of the lifter operating mechanism. Claim 9 further specifies that the second link mechanism 32 is connected between the lifter operating mechanism 30 and the rear end portion of the frame 8 via the first link mechanism (e.g. 20, 24, 26).

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is clearly in condition for allowance. An early notice thereof is earnestly solicited.

If, after reviewing this Amendment, the Examiner feels there are any issues remaining which must be resolved before the application can be passed to issue, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned by telephone in order to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Yasuhide TAKATA et al.

By: 

Charles R. Watts
Registration No. 33,142
Attorney for Applicants

CRW/asd
Washington, D.C. 20006-1021
Telephone (202) 721-8200
Facsimile (202) 721-8250
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